AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (Previously presented): A method of fermenting milk by means of a purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial culture which is capable of being metabolically active in said milk, the method comprising

(i) isolating a purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain,

(ii) propagating the isolated bacterial strain in a medium wherein the strain is capable of replicating to obtain a bacterial culture of said strain,

(iii) adding the thus obtained bacterial culture to the milk and keeping the milk under conditions where the bacterial culture is able to acidify the milk, but is not capable of DNA replication,

whereby, if the milk is contaminated with a bacteriophage, the milk is acidified to a pH lower than milk acidified using a wild type parent strain of said purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain.

Claims 2-8 cancelled

Claim 9 (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial culture is selected from the group consisting of *Lactococcus* spp., *Lactobacillus* spp., *Leuconostoc* spp., *Pediococcus* spp., *Streptococcus* spp., *Propionibacterium* spp., *Bifidobacterium* spp., *Staphylococcus* spp., *Micrococcus* spp., *Bacillus* spp., *Enterobacteriaceae* spp. *Actinomycetes* spp., *Corynebacterium* spp. and *Brevibacterium* spp.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): A method according to claim 9 wherein the bacterial culture is a culture of *Lactococcus lactis.*

Claim 11 (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial culture added to the milk includes the bacterial strain at a concentration in the range of 10^5 to 10^9 CFU/ml or g of the milk.

Claim 12. (Currently amended): A method according to claim 1 where the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial culture comprises a genetically modified strain transformed with

a plasmid including DNA encoding the soluble part (F1) of the membrane bound (F0F1 type) H+-ATPase or a portion of F1 exhibiting ATPase activity, said DNA being derived from *Lactococcus lactis subsp. cremoris* having the sequence stated in SEQ ID No. 7, *Lactococcus lactis subsp. lactis* having the sequence stated in SEQ ID No. 8, *Streptococcus thermophilus* having the sequence stated in SEQ ID No. 9, *Phaffia rhodozyma* having the sequence stated in SEQ ID No. 10, and *Trichoderma reesei* having the sequence stated in SEQ ID No. 11 ~~described in WO/10089~~.

Claim 13-16. (Cancelled).

Claim 17. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial culture comprises a bacterial strain which is capable of increasing the size of the cells without mitosis.

Claims 18-23 (Cancelled).

Claim 24. (Previously presented): A method of manufacturing a milk product comprising adding a culture composition comprising a purine or thymidine auxotrophic lactic acid bacterium to milk and keeping the thus inoculated milk under conditions where the lactic acid bacterium is able to acidify the milk, but is not capable of DNA replication, subject to the limitation, that the lactic acid bacterium does not include a strain selected from the group consisting of strain DN101, DN102, DN103, DN104 and DN105, whereby, if the milk is contaminated with a bacteriophage, the milk is acidified to a pH lower than milk acidified using a wild type parent strain of said purine or thymidine auxotrophic lactic acid bacterium.

Claims 25-27 (Cancelled).

Claim 28 (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus lactis* strain DN105 deposited under the accession number DSM 12289.

Claim 29 (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus lactis* strain MBP71 deposited under the accession number DSN12891.

Claim 30 (Previously presented): A method for keeping the capability of a bacterial strain to ferment milk even in the presence of a bacteriophage, the method comprising:

(i) isolating a purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain; and

(ii) adding the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to said milk, and keeping the milk under conditions where the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is able to ferment the milk, but is not capable of DNA replication;

whereby, if the milk is contaminated with a bacteriophage, the milk is acidified to a pH lower than milk acidified using a wild type parent strain of said purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain.

Claim 31 (Previously presented): A method of preparing a dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring comprising, adding a purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial culture to a dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material, said bacterial culture being capable of being metabolically active in said dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material, the bacterial culture made by a method comprising:

(i) isolating a purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain,

(ii) propagating the isolated purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain in a medium wherein the isolated bacterial strain is capable of replicating to obtain the bacterial culture of said isolated bacterial strain, and

(iii) adding the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial culture to the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material and maintaining the thus-obtained inoculated dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material under such conditions that the bacterial strain of the bacterial culture is metabolically active, but is not capable of DNA replication,

whereby, if the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material is contaminated with a bacteriophage, the starting material is fermented to produce more dairy flavouring and/or product for a cheese flavouring than a starting material fermented using a wild type parent strain of said purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain.

Claim 32 (Previously presented): A method according to claim 9 wherein the bacterial culture is *E. coli.*